

7-067
Correspondence with Lord
Gordon Phipps & Sir Gerald

**** N.B. New Address.

81 Narborough Road,
COSBY,
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16. OCT. 1966

Dear Grattan,

Thank you for both your recent letters, and my apologies for not having been in touch with you before now. Actually I only recently returned from an extensive tour in Northern Nigeria lecturing to various groups of educationists mainly on the problems posed by the attempted integration of Western education on a Muslim society, but also with some work on the problems of educating a nomadic society - namely the Fulani - who pose far greater and intractable problems than we are dealing with on the home front.

Now concerning matters in the Leicester area. I am as a result of the above activity rather out of touch with all developments in the area. The broad picture is this. As a result of the vigilante attitude prescribed for the police by the Leicester City Council the large number of travellers normally resident in the city at this time of year has been considerably reduced. Many of their sites are now completely inaccessible and on many other sites warning notices have been placed in great profusion. Adjacent Councils in the County of Leicester have taken avoiding action in view of the potential growth in the number of travellers likely to be found in the district as a repercussion of the City's actions. Various traditional sites have been fenced off with timber posts and tubular steel piping. There is some vague idea in the air that the Blaby Rural District Council are allowing travellers to stand on a lane near the M1 at Narborough, however Enderby Parish Council know nothing to this effect and as the lane stands in their parish it seems reasonable to assume that this is what will be presented as the Blaby R.D.C.'s plan when they reply to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government's request for reports on action taken to re-habilitate travellers; (currently probing on this matter.)

Regarding your idea for a get together - I think some good can be made of such a meeting, though personally I have reservations about certain of the issues that you raise, but these are more of a sociological nature than anything. The idea of bringing together a number of travellers is certainly well worth pursuing and one which we raised in that early meeting with Richard Hauser. Just at the moment both the Prices and the Lees are in the Leicester area and I will endeavour to prise at least one of them out but its somewhat difficult to get them to travel such distances without some security. Furthermore I think such a meeting, if travellers are to attend, needs to be extremely well planned before-hand and any policies formulated at such a meeting will need to be of a reserved nature. At the moment I am free most week-ends with the exception of October 29th and November 26th.

Look forward to meeting to you shortly,

Yours, David [Smith]

Greenways
Knockholt
near Sevenoaks
Kent

October 17th., 1966

Dear David, [Smith]

Your trip to Nigeria sounds very interesting and stimulating. I'd like to hear more about it sometime.

The outlook for travellers in your area seem black. Where are people going to go when all these places are closed up everywhere. I wonder if the replies to the Government circular will give a picture of what is really happening.

John Brun propose we meet in London on Sunday, November 6th. to discuss the holding of this proposed gathering of Gypsies and travellers for the purpose of forming a national association linking the various scattered groups. We will hold the general foundation meeting sometime in December so that, among other things, we can approach the Government for information about replies to the circular.

We can this give ourselves about a month to make contact with as many groups and individuals as possible to prepare them for the meeting. It does not have to be a big, mass gathering but rather a meeting of people representative of their groups. We can get a room to hold 40 at the "Peace News" offices for 15s., for example.

To keep up communications after the gathering, I hope that we'll be able to start a monthly newsletter to send out to the 100 or more groups we're already in touch with. John is going up to Scotland next January to make contact with Scottish travellers again.

Donald Kenrick propose we produce a pamphlet covering briefly the background of the Gypsy people, the international movement etc for Gypsies and travellers in Britain and Ireland. He says we should approach Gypsy Lore Society members to contribute to a fund for this purpose.

Could you make a few written notes about the situation around Leicester in time for November 6th.? Do you go into Birmingham much? I have some contacts there who should be looked up sometime.